disheartening) which the society had encountered, and to its now increasing and steady progress. He also referred to the presence in the room of two pensioners, who were in receipt of weekly allowances from the funds,—the one, an infirm mason, upwards of seventy years of age; the other, aged forty, afflicted with paralysis in both arms. He trusted that, supported by the trade, the society would flourish, and that they might enjoy many more such festivals as the present.

The Chairman then proposed "The Press," in connection with the health of the Editor of THE BUILDER. He adverted in flattering terms to the efforts of that paper in diffusing information, and promoting the interests of the working classes, and kindly expressed regret at the accident which kept the Editor from them on that occasion.

ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND.

ON the 11th the Scottish Institute visited Stirling and the neighbourhood, and examined the Gothic building comprising the East and West churches, Dunblane, Doune Castle, &c. One of the objects of the meeting was to entertain the Hon. Secretary at dinner, in token of his services, and about a hundred persons sat down to partake of it, with Sheriff Gordon in the chair. Sheriff Bell, in the course of some remarks, said:—The architect ought to possess the painter's eye, the sculptor's hand, and the mathematician's mind, for if our mountains and hills and valleys be the poetry of the country, architecture is the poetry of mighty cities. In thinking of the graces of a great city, it is not its rows of streets, it is its public buildings we think of. If we mention London,—St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, start up before the mind's eye; if we speak of Paris,—the Louvre and Notre Dame appear distinctly before us; and these are the features that, in all great cities, give the associations to the city. But without going to cities,—even in the country, what more beautiful than the garden temple, or the hill dotted with villas, or the palace in the stately park? I can conceive of a city so meagre, mean, and paltry in its buildings, that it is impossible to imagine that the minds of the inhabitants of that town are not mean and paltry; but the moment we see such a city as Rome, with its numberless towers and palaces, we feel that the inhabitants of that city must have been men of majestic minds.

The "Institute of British Architects" was one of the toasts. Amongst the architects and artists present were Mr. Rhind, Mr. Peddie, Mr. Rochead, Mr. Cousin, Mr. Ballantyne, Mr. D. R. Hay, Mr. Handyside Ritchie, &c. &c.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC PROGRESS.

THE following statement respecting the contest before the Committee of the House of Commons appears in the *Daily News*:—The British Electric Telegraph Company have proved signally successful in their struggle against the combined opposition of no less than twenty-seven railway companies, besides the old Electric Telegraph Company. The preamble of their Bill was proved on Wednesday morning, and all the clauses were likewise gone through, with the exception of five or six, which were reserved for discussion. We understand, however, that the company have assented to the offer of the railway companies, who express themselves willing to waive all opposition to the Bill in the House of Lords, provided these clauses are made subject to an amicable arrangement. This result is most satisfactory, as it is another step towards the establishment of a system of cheap and efficient telegraphic communication, which could never be attained so long as the entire telegraphic wires of the country were under the exclusive control of a single monopolist company. [It is to be seen yet, however, whether, as in some instances, the result be not an "amalgamation" that would constitute a still more monstrous monopoly than ever. The Legislature ought to look to such possibilities of "amalgamation," and prevent its evil consequences in such cases as this, *if they can*.] The chief objects proposed by the Bill of the British Electric Telegraph Company, it will be remembered, are the limited liability of the shareholders [which may present an obstacle to future "amalgamation"], and the power of compulsorily laying down their wires over any railway in the kingdom.

The arrangements pending between the Electric Telegraph Company, the Astronomer Royal, and the South-Eastern Railway, for the establishment and transmission throughout London and the provinces of mean Greenwich or uniform time, being completed, the construction of apparatus to carry out the object was commenced by Mr. Edwin Clark, the company's engineer, upon the dome of the company's west-end station, opposite Hungerford Market. A scaffolding was first erected on the top of the cupola, built under the direction of Mr. Sandys, the constructor of the apparatus, designed by Mr. Clark. This scaffolding was 30 feet high, the total height at which the apparatus stands being about 110 feet above the level of the Thames. The apparatus consists of a quadrangular hollow shaft or pillar of wood 38 feet high, and 8 feet in circumference, formed of three sections. The first section was fixed by the workmen into the floor of the room underneath the dome, and thence carried through and joined on to the second section, and the third, the latter of which was then passed through the centre of a large globe or ball, intended, by means of sympathetic electrical action, to fall every day simultaneously with the well-known ball on the top of Greenwich Observatory, between which and the Strand the electric wires have been completed for the purpose. The ball is nearly 6 feet high, and 16 feet in circumference. It is formed of zinc, painted black, with a broad white belt diametered about it, making it look something like a ringed Saturn. The shaft is continued a few feet above the ball, and at the extremity is a bright gilded weather vane, with "E. T. C." on the arms. The apparatus is provided with an air cylinder in connection with the telegraphic wires between London and Greenwich, and when the ball at Greenwich falls, an instantaneous shock of electricity will be communicated along them, and this acting on an electrical trigger connected with the ball in the Strand, will cause it to fall simultaneously with that at Greenwich. The cost of carrying out this new chronometrical machine is estimated at 1,000*l*.

The Morse line of telegraph between Washington and New York has just declared a quarterly dividend at the rate of twelve per cent. per annum, although it is subjected to active competition, and adopts a scale of charges which, as compared with those in England, are merely fractional.

The *Albany Evening Journal* purposes to introduce a new word into the vocabulary, the object of which is to avoid the necessity of using two words when one will answer. The word referred to is *telegram*, to be used instead of "telegraph despatch," or of "telegraphic communication." To telegraph, it is explained, is to write from a distance. The telegram is the writing itself, executed from a distance. Monogram, &c. it is added, are words formed upon the same analogy and in good acceptation. The House line in their communications, are recommended to use the word *teletypes*, as they are *printed*, not written.

ENORMOUS PLANK.—On Tuesday there was at the Bridgewater Canal-yard, Chester-road, Manchester, an enormous plank, which had been brought from Liverpool by the canal. Its dimensions are—length, 144 feet; breadth, 20 inches; and thickness, 6 inches throughout. It is of a species of wood known as gum wood, or African oak, and was imported from Africa into Liverpool during last summer. The tree from which this plank has been sawn must have been of a gigantic height, probably not much less than 300 feet.

LONDON WALL.—A correspondent informs us that in digging out the ground for some buildings in George-street, Tower-hill, he has laid bare the foundations of the old Roman wall, consisting of massive masonry.

IRELAND FOR THE ENGLISH.

WE are glad to find that a stream of visitors is setting in towards the sister island; and the reports from some who have been there are likely to increase it. They are unanimous in their admiration of the scenery, and acknowledgment of the cordiality they found.

About 1,300 persons have crossed from Holyhead to Kingstown, by the Chester and Holyhead Company's express-boat, during the last fortnight. The two mail-boats have also brought over large numbers within the same period. Nearly 400 "tourist tickets" have been issued since the system came into operation. The holders are chiefly from London, Liverpool, and Manchester; but there have also been visitors from all the other towns at which these tickets are issued.

The Irish Exhibition.—A Cork correspondent of the Dublin *News Letter* says,—"Those who come to the regatta in July will have the best view of the Exhibition, for then all the articles will have been arranged, labelled, ticketed, catalogued, and classified. A second exhibition is, in point of fact, about being added to the first. Public spirit has been aroused—private and national enterprise has been stimulated, and the consequence is, that the Exhibition will be a much finer one than could have been expected. The carpenters are busily at work erecting an additional building, 150 feet long, 25 feet high, and as many broad, leading from the eastern court into the ball-room. There must be somewhat about 300 packages unpacked. Those who have seen the Crystal Palace may be indisposed to look at anything Irish: indeed, this feeling has prevailed more with Irishmen than with those of England. There are those who sneer at the products of the land that gave them birth, and from which they derive their means of existence, and forget that it is less laudable to patronise and praise the manufactures of a prosperous nation than to prop up, encourage, and sustain the infantine and struggling arts and manufactures of our own country. As Mr. Barry, in a very clever ode relative to the Exhibition, has written—

> 'We boast not of wealth of foreign lands,
> But what our own fair island yields:
> The produce of her teeming fields,
> The labours of her children's hands,
> The tissues of her loom,
> The varied marbles of her hills
> The ores that pave her pebbly rills,
> May here find room.'"

It is said that Mr. Dargan has made an offer to the committee of the Royal Dublin Society to expend 10,000*l*. or, if necessary, 20,000*l*. in the erection of a building in connection with, or upon, their grounds, for the purposes of a grand National Exhibition, the profits incidental to the admission of the public to be derived by him, and the articles and products exhibited to comprise those of native growth, cultivation, and workmanship, and, in addition to these, such foreign products as may be available and productive in Ireland.

Notices of Books.

A Theory of the Negative Sign; in which, from Principles general and new in application, the Algebra of Positive and Negative Quantities is simply and logically deduced. By HENRY B. BROWNING, St. John's College, Cambridge, author of an "Algebra of Ratios," &c. Samuel Sharp, Stamford: 1852.

THE object of this little work is to inculcate clear and correct notions of the affection and use of the negative sign in algebra, and the mode of applying it in a train of reasoning. Those who have previously acquired some knowledge of the subject from other elementary works, will readily assent to the principles here employed; but we suspect that those who come unprepared will not so readily overcome the obstacles that present themselves in the separation of the quantities to be operated upon; nevertheless, we consider the motive for which the system has been drawn up a good one, for it is of the utmost importance to the students of algebra, that they

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